# FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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**FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER**
Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

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*Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among* mankind.

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## LOOKING AT HIS CANVAS, THE ARTIST SPEAKS WHO PAINTED THE MOUNTAIN, EL CAPITAN

*Howard G. Hanson*

I so paint you, El Capitan,
that if ever God takes off
the veils of mortal things,
making visible their timeless bodies,
I could stand here also
in awe of a mountain's
mighty nakedness.

*EDITORIAL*

## CHANGES—AND THE STILLNESS THAT NEVER DOES

Everybody says life has changed more in the past century than in any other. It obviously has. My parents, who are still alive, were born while Victoria was still Queen of England and Empress of India. They were brought up in rural America of the time, with all its ideals of the sacredness of human individuality and of the inevitability of human progress—by means of innate goodness, hard work, and the discoveries of science—toward utopia.

Their generation must have enjoyed a now-unknown sense of safety among the green and productive fields, the spick and span houses full of highminded classics, peacock feathers, and artfully arranged clutter, the tent shows, ice-cream parlors, and the trotters at the fair grounds, and the beautifully kept churches and cemeteries that supplied corrective reminders of time's flux and eternity. They must have known every day of their childhoods that God was in his heaven and all certainly was right with the world.

To imagine the sweet simplicities of that world is to realize the enormity of the changes that have swept it away into crannies of nostalgia in only aging minds. Just think of what has happened in the course of some lifetimes still unfinished: the great wars, the lesser wars, the inventions of scientists, the inventions in the arts, the ideas fabricated and incredibly disseminated. And it all took place so fast. I myself can remember running out to the yard to stare up at an airplane as if it were Icarus trying his wings the first and only time.

Being human, we have reacted humanly to these changes. We have selected those that are convenient, electricity, hot and cold running water, and the telephone, and those that entertain us, the movies, TV, record-players, and so forth, until we all have attained the comfort and pleasure of kings, having the best of everything at our beck and call, the top singers, the cleverest actors, the world's champion athletes; even the President comes to our living-rooms to brief us and to chat. Sometimes, along with what we want we unavoidably tune in to an experience we do not care to know anything about, the war, for instance, or the current riot, or somebody with an opinion directly the opposite of our own. Yet it is easy enough—like snapping the royal fingers—to tune out or switch to Lawrence Welk, Flip Wilson, or the great movie of the day. Our way of protecting ourselves, our brains and our sensibilities, is somewhat neurotic and monotonous. But we prefer the familiar and the tried-and-true to any more changes now.

Complaining of the modern world, we relax by watching astronauts walk upon the moon. We refuse to see that life is a

matter of perpetual change for everyone of us. It always has been that, and the modern world, communicating with us without letup, does not let us forget it long.

Of all the changes that have taken place the most disturbing are those inside our children. They are so different from us—from the very hair on their heads to the thoughts and hopes and dreams within—they seem incomprehensible. They make us even more insecure. We fret over their behaviour and we fret over the moments when they grow still and appear to be thinking.

Nowadays we are all insecure, we all have the jitters, are baffled and scared. It is difficult not to wear out ourselves as well as others with laments for a past that never was quite that ideal until lately and with dreads of the future that promises to bring only more changes. . .

Where is personal peace? Where is wisdom? Where is just a little relief that lasts?

These essentials—we consider them essentials because, without them, we are frazzled into breakdowns of one sort or another—are stored where they always were: within ourselves. They reside within us as permanently as the atoms of atoms. In our contemporary frenzies we have forgotten their presence or perhaps, having been born in this century, we never had the chance to know they existed. Whether we have experienced them or not, we all crave some stillness. It is a relief. It makes us truly comfortable. And it is dignified. With this stillness and the dignity it imparts, we are able to learn to abide by stillness while the world continues to change.

Who are we, after all, that changes should upset us so? We must let the Lord work his will. We must learn to say, "Not my will but Thine," and, as we say it, believe it—and, as we believe it, we will feel it. Every day is a change. So is every minute. By means of the courage of prayer, which orientals call "meditation," we find our stillnesses, and only in those stillnesses, more permanent than statues or the rocks on the earth, are we able to stand in calm confidence among the uproars of minutes, hours, days, nights, weeks, months, and years.—P.G.

## THE TIMES ORDAIN *Howard G. Hanson*

Of lost things I'll not think lest I profane:
of forests or desert where a man might grow
toward God in solitude, of moons ago
that lovers hymned or Egyptian seers, of rain
twiddling leaf-lace against sky's porcelain—
of all old gods' lost gifts; what debt I owe
this earth, waned stars, slow time I cannot know
or, knowing, must deny; the times ordain.

Between jet sound-shock, blasphemed wars, and rush
appointments, sense fails, caught, creviced too deep
for thought; apocalypse broods waiting. . . Hush!
Dare not risk that despair, lest bloodbeat creep
toward meaning. Through ears locked closed, I hear the crush
of atoms in my pillow beneath sleep.

## ONE ETERNITY *H. G. Woods*

If time has written well
the lines upon my face;
if shadows of the past have cleared,
and left instead
the light that burns with Truth,
I shall embrace
the years that cleave
to One Eternity.

# UPWARD THRUST

*Mildred Long*

A tiny seed falls into a crack between great boulders. It finds a bit of soil somewhere and the rain trickles down to water it. The life within it is stirred, aroused, and it begins to grow in the manner of the seeds. There is that power of life within it that causes it to burst its shell and begin to send a shoot upward toward the sun.

Then some day as I wander through the rocks or on a mountain trail, behold, I see a tree growing, lifting its branches to the sky. I look in amazement to see it growing between two great boulders. And on closer inspection I see it has actually split a great boulder apart, and there through the crack, widening it, breaking the rock asunder, it has climbed toward light and heaven. Marvelous power of life in a tiny seed!

The soul of man contains the seed of power for the upward thrust. We do not know just where that power resides. But somewhere within us God has planted a seed, a spark, a small portion of His own Spirit which has the power to reach upward, to climb toward the Source, to split the hard core of outward things apart, to do the impossible.

And whenever man discovers this power and uses it, he can rise above the darkness, the discord, the obstruction of negative emotions and outward appearances. And thus he can lift his spirits above the clouds and catch the glory of the blue sky and the peace that resides in this God-given power.

Let man retire within himself to a quiet spot, a blooming garden, and rest and wait for the dawning consciousness of that Divine Presence which is constant and unchanging. Daily, hourly, we do this as our spiritual faculties develop, till we too can burst the hard shell of life around us and rise to reach the blue of God's eternal Peace.

## WE NAME OURSELVES *Carla Patsuris*

With habits cutting change in each of us
Invisible into visible grows
And Infinite from the Infinite flows
Transposing silence into cumulus,
Then centering aim to calm or to riot—
As coming or going shifting wind blows
Its peltings to point the way a path shows—
We age in furies or mature in quiet:

Serving seasons' legerdemain
Catastrophes merge and moments submit,
Old corners are rounded, altered forms fit
One day to another shaping a plan
AND WE NAME OURSELVES AS ACTIONS DESIGN
THE NATURAL CURVE OF NATURE'S INCLINE.

## QUAKER UTTERANCE *Erica May Brooks*

Harken to the indwelling Voice,
wait and bide. Within
the sustenance of silence,
Catch the echo of song.

Listen and lean, to the sudden
message which may stir thy heart,
to impart. No chance thought
of fleeting circumstance.

But words like unto light
caught after calm vigilance.
So only,—be thy utterance.

# FOR THE JOY OF EATING

*Emma S. McLaughlin*

Perhaps it was the fact that I had recently entered a contest, hopes soaring, and then ended up as one of the "also rans," that started my thoughts reeling back into the nostalgic days of childhood.

When, in that memorable time, I was blessed with the great wealth of one whole nickel, all my very own, I was not long the keeper of the coin. To use the prophetic words of my father, the money would burn a hole in my pocket until I was rid of it. But I would not part with such a great treasure only to receive a mediocre tribute in return. Oh no! No licorice strip sporting five white sugar dots for me, no lemon sour balls, no wax whistles filled with mouth-watering honey-sweet nectar, and no ice cream cone. I knew in advance what sweetmeat I wished to receive in exchange for my shining feathered Indian. Such affluence often seemed its own reward and I would be tempted to hold fast to it, but invariably I would place it in the moist, fat hand of the corner grocer and carry off that rarity of childhood—a box of Cracker Jack.

Now if you have ever possessed such a treat, if you have ever pushed exploring fingers down into the wax-lined depths of such a box, you know whereof I speak. And you are also aware of that added attraction—the prize in the bottom of the box.

Susie and Katy and Rosie, three friends, could never wait until the whole of the contents of their boxes was consumed, but hastily spilled all of the sticky delight into their laps and, rummaging through the little piles, they would pounce delightedly on their respective prizes.

I never wanted the expectation to end so quickly. First I must shake the box to be certain that a prize was there. When assured, by the heaviness of it striking the side of the box, or

*Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. Though weary, love is not tired. Though pressed, it is not straitened. Though alarmed, it is not confounded.*

just by the certainty of my knowing because I wanted it to be so, then, and only then, would I get on with the joy of eating.

I never hurried, never placed more than one morsel at a time on my tongue, savoring each delicious bit, but wondering, always wondering about the worth of the prize. What *could* it be? A ring for my finger? A bird whistle? A puzzle? The kind with a clown's happy face and two rolling beads to be shifted into position in the empty, staring sockets of his eyes? There must be *something* there, surely. I couldn't just be hearing the roll of a hard, unpopped kernel! So I ate on, wondering, until the box was emptied of all sweetness, except for the promise. Ultimately I was faced with the ordeal of knowing—the moment of truth.

I suppose many of us live out our lives in the hopeful expectation of what lies hidden in the bottom of our popcorn box. If you are like me, you shake the gift impatiently and listen to the sound. Wanting desperately to know the worth of the prize, you assess its quality by the rattle. Will it be a treasure—something of gold? Does it have the ring of genuine quality or the tinny sound of a penny whistle? Perhaps the moment of truth will prove the prize to be only a dud, a hard, dry kernel, never exposed to the white heat of the fire, never having the chance to flower to white perfection. We delve into the darkness, holding fast to the comfort of the expectation. At times we draw it almost to the light, only to drop it back again—wanting to know, afraid of the knowing, the possible disappointment.

I would have solved this dilemma easily for my children.

I would have explained that the worth of the prize wasn't so all-important. I would have been quick to remind them of the joy of savoring each sticky bite, just for the sheer pleasure of the enjoyment. I would have had them accept—yes, even *gladly* accept, whatever small tribute the box had to offer.

I could have explained all this to them. Somehow, I find myself an inept pupil, but I console myself with the thought that there must be many like me in the class. There must be many others who nudge life impatiently, who shake, prod, pry and worry the box in a vain attempt to guess what lies in store for them.

Slowly, but very slowly, I am beginning to learn the enjoyment of the gift of life, for the gift itself is the prize. I am beginning to take the kernel of each new day, bird song, sunrise, a drop of dew, the laughter of children, as the very sustenance of life. With the coming of twilight, the small lantern of the firefly will be an added joy.

What matter the prize we might find, the glory we might attain, the heights we might reach, or not reach? Even if the box doesn't offer exactly what we had expected, isn't the treat a blessing?

## COUNTERACTION *Pollyanna Sedziol*

Mary chose the better part
when she settled at Christ's knee
while Martha, duty-pressed,
worked on resentfully.

How palatable was the bread
her angry hands brought out?
How quenching was the bitter wine
mirroring her spirit's drought?

## VELVETY SHADOWS *Leonard Opalov*

My friend can be
a velvety shadow
in the silence of night,
when the full moon
is milk-white,
when the sky is
embellished with
spangles of stars,
and somewhere
deep within me
someone strums
upon a silvery guitar.

## MEDITATION ON THE WORD "GENTLEMAN"

*Samuel M. Silver*

In America we scorn titles and hereditary honors. We find the classification of society into lords and commoners, into patricians and plebeians, contrary to our democratic way of life. Yet, we men do cherish one title, which, from childhood on, we try, in our better moments, to merit. It is the title of gentleman. The feminine equivalent is not gentlewoman, which has something of a British aristocratic overtone to it, but perhaps just lady. One essayist, I think it was Robert Louis Stevenson, said that actually there is no feminine equivalent to gentleman, but that a woman who possesses certain traits of considerateness,

courtliness, and self-control might just as well be described as having the qualities of a gentleman.

We use the word "gentleman" so often that we forget what it actually says. We speak of a "gentleman farmer," and we even associate the word with a boxer who once lived to throw terror into his opponents, presumably in a chivalrous fashion. This is most odd, for how can we equate pugilism and gentleness? After all, should not a gentleman, above all, be gentle? Gentleness is one of the rarest of masculine traits, and yet one of the most desirable, it seems to me.

A good description of what a person ought to be like in order to earn the title of gentleman can be found in a glittering passage of the Bible. Psalm 15 is known, as a matter of fact, as "The Gentleman Psalm," for it outlines some of the virtues which a fine person ought to possess.

Turn to Psalm 15, and you will read: "Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle, and who shall dwell upon Thy holy mountain?" In other words, who is worthy of God's affection? And the answer is: "He that walks uprightly and performs acts of righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart, that has no slander upon his tongue, nor doeth evil to his fellow-man, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor....in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors them that fear the Lord.... He that swears to his own hurt, and changes not.... He that puts not out his money on interest, nor takes a bribe at the expense of the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved."

*True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavors to mend it.*

*—William Penn*

*He lived in eternity, which is a manner of living, not a length of life. —Sir Walter Raleigh*

## A HAUNTING REFRAIN
## OF THE SWEETEST MUSIC I EVER HEARD

*Velta Myrle Allen*

In reminiscences of the past there are many incidents which are unforgettable, and the following is one of them. One time when I had decided to move my family from New York City to California, it was necessary to dispose of much which could be replaced easily elsewhere, such as furniture and clothing. So on a nice sunny day I gathered up a huge bundle of clothing the girls could well do without in a warmer climate and started for a receiving-place which happened to be near Columbia University. My bundle was heavy with lovely clothing for girls in various sizes. As I approached my destination, I noticed a sign that read, "Closed on Mondays." Disappointedly I sat down on some steps to do a little thinking, wondering what to do with my load. I started to leave, when I saw a little black woman approaching. Perhaps I smiled first, I do not remember, but she smiled, too, and spontaneously I asked her, "Do you know anyone who would like all this clothing?" She looked as if the angels had surrounded her with a halo. With the most gracious smile I ever was given, she said, "I have been walking along here praying that God would send someone to help with this problem, and He has sent you." Her gratitude for the clothing was overwhelming, and as I was about to walk away, feeling a million times blessed, she said, "I will get down on my knees every day of my life and ask God to bless you."

*I hope that when I have done what I can He will do with me what He pleases. —Brother Lawrence*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

*from A SCRIPTURE SERVICE OF REPENTANCE*

*Emmet J. Norton, S.J.*

Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love." * Has my heart been open in love—or coldly self-enclosed? * Is my life God-centered rather than ego-centered? * Do I live my everyday life in such a way that my desires and actions are prompted by my commitment to Christ? * Do I actively recognize the profound dignity of my brothers as sons of the Father, Christ's anointed, temples of the Spirit—or do I concentrate on their surface human limitations? * Do I see in the people entrusted to my care the sons and daughters of the living God, given to me to help them grow as Christians? * Have I been willing to be open to others—and to accept others as they are? * Have I been free of personal, subjective judgments in decisions which affect the common good? * Have I been too resistant to change because I find personal security in the old ways? * Have I been too insistent upon change without giving due consideration to the values of the past? * In what ways have I failed to show awareness and concern for the total world community and its anguish, its poverty, its many instances of human degradation, the injustices of racism, the ravages of war? * Am I truly convinced that my mission as a Christian is to mirror God's love for men?

*Most of the shadows of this life are caused by standing in our own sunshine. —Emerson*

## THE FLOWER CART

*Eleanor Ebersole*

An old woman sold flowers in a corner of the farmers' market. No one knew where she came from. She quietly paid her rent and displayed her wares. As the seasons came and went, she offered for sale the brightest and best that were available anywhere—daisies, pussy willows, asters, chrysanthemums, poinsettias.

Gradually strange things began to happen to the woman's flowers. A gang of school children descended on the market one day. They tipped over this and that, tossed apples at each other, and then, strangely, set about demolishing the woman's flower cart. Flowers were tramped on, and glass vases destroyed. As they left, the children were seen each with flowers in their hair or poised over their ear.

When the wild children had gone, the other sales people stealthily moved about, helping the woman, but there was little left to save.

The next week, surprisingly, the woman appeared, paid her rent, and set up a bright new painted cart filled with flowers and plants which were by far the brightest and best in the market. Her cart was to be admired by all who passed by.

Then, strangely, there was a fire in the east stalls of the market. People began to scream and throw water and whatever came into their mind, to smother the flames. In the rush of the moment someone racing toward the fire took hold of the woman's

cart and pushed it forward just as if it were a small baby-carriage. The flowers went flying and the containers were all hurled at the flames in an effort to put them out.

When the holocaust was finally over, the old woman was nowhere to be seen, nor were her cart and flowers, except for a few crushed blossoms on the cement floor.

Surely she would not come back again. Her source of flowers would have to be inexhaustible for that.

In truth they must have been, for there she was the next week, paying her rent and setting up her wares in a freshly painted cart.

Of course by now she had become a curiosity. Why was she not discouraged? Why hadn't she given up? Or run out of flowers?

The old woman said nothing. She seldom talked. But the sales people wanted to know. One saleswoman picked up some daisies and held them while she chattered on. Without thinking, she pulled all the petals off each one. She left with a shamed "I'm sorry for that."

Another sales person picked up the chrysanthemums, and they smashed.

One by one, the sales people, as they talked and pressed about the old woman's business, absentmindedly destroyed something of the cart or flowers.

By evening, the old woman was gone.

The following week she was back as usual. There was a dainty sign painted legibly on her cart: ALL LIFE IS A GIFT.

"What does it matter?" the old woman said graciously when she finally talked. "What does it matter how the flowers go? If they are sold, or if they are stolen? They were a gift to me. What you do with them is yours to decide. To put out fires, to decorate your hair, to meet your nervous whim. The flowers are received, and there are always more for me."

*Those having lamps will pass them on to others. —Plato*

## LOVE *from THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV by Dostoevskv*

Love will teach us all things; but we must learn how to win love; it is got with difficulty; it is a possession dearly bought with much labor and in long time; for one must love not sometimes only, for a passing moment, but always. There is no man who doth not sometimes love: even the wicked can do that.

And let not men's sin dishearten thee, love a man even in his sin, for that love is a likeness of the divine love, and is the summit of love on earth.

Love all God's creation, both the whole and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of light, love the animals, love the plants, love each separate thing. If you love each thing, you will perceive the mystery of God in all; and when you perceive this, you will thenceforward grow every day to a fuller understanding of it; until you come at last to love the whole world with a love that will then be all-embracing and universal.

## MID-COURSE DRIFT *Rose Noller*

There comes a time when after launching, he,
The Astronaut, is left adrift in space.
How awesome to be "lost" it would be
When he must redirect his course and face
Infinitude of suns, and make correction...
Each human being so must face the new
And himself complete aerial connection,
Precipitate the dreams from which he flew.
As Astronaut must judge, so do we
Arise from habit-forms to wonder-change,
Alone, in awe, before the starry sea;
Our launching now complete, to rearrange
A lofty course to suit expansion plan,—
Become, in fact, a something *more* than man!

# THE SONG OF THE BLESSED ONE

*from LITTLE TALKS ON THE GITA*

*T. L. Vaswani*

*(The message of the Bhagavad Gita was given by Sri Krishna to a young man, Arjuna. Arjuna was young in years and rich in idealism. Does not Arjuna represent the youths of India, the youths of the world? And to the youths of the world hath the Gita spoken, century after century:—"We live, today, in a broken, bleeding world. We shall build a new, a better, a more radiant world!")*

What is the meaning of the title, "Bhagavad Gita"?

"Gita" means "song."

Sri Krishna was a singer. His teaching is named a song. It is a song of life. Life should be a song, not merely criticism. Sri Krishna himself loved to be called a singer. He brought with himself music and melody. He was a man of harmony. Not without reason do we associate the name of Krishna with the *murli* (flute). His teaching is given us in the form of a song.

Philosophers have written books in the form of criticism. Kant, for instance, wrote a book which is the foundation of modern philosophy. He spoke of his book as *Critique of Pure Reason*. Criticism—yes! But, surely, criticism is not the final word of life. It is necessary to be intellectual, critical, reflective, questioning. But something more is needed. Life should be a song. If you be merely critical, you cannot appreciate life in its abundance.

The one great teaching of the Gita is: make your life a song. Is your life a song? Examine your life. So much of controversy,

fighting, wrangling, quarreling! Toward the close of every day, ask this question:—What song did I sing today?

The word "Gita" means "song," and the word "Bhagavad" means "belonging to Bhagavan."

Ancient India produced three great persons, every one of whom is given the revered name of Bhagavan. Sri Krishna is called Bhagavan. Gautama is called Bhagavan by Buddhists. And the third great person who was named Bhagavan is not known to many. He was great in wisdom and lofty in vision—Mahavira. He is looked upon as Bhagavan by the Jains. This is the highest title which India could give to anyone.

"Bhagavan" has a number of meanings. One meaning is "Blessed One." Sri Krishna is called Blessed. And "Bhagavad Gita" is "the Song of the Blessed One."

Another meaning of "Bhagavan" is "Saviour." So "Bhagavad Gita" also means "the Song of the Saviour." Sri Krishna was regarded as a Saviour of humanity. In his own days, it is true, his greatness was not realized by very many. He did not attract very large crowds. One and only one has appeared in all history who in his lifetime attracted large crowds—the Buddha. Many of the rich and prosperous did not listen to Krishna. A few simple *gopis* (milkmaids) and a few simple peasants stood by him. When he played the flute, the village folk—peasants and pure-hearted girls —listened to him. But many of the wealthy, prudent persons stood aloof. After he passed on, he steadily grew upon the hearts of the people. A few first missed him: then the number grew of those who marveled at the mystery that had moved in him and his music.

Great ones come to us in simplicity, not with shout or clamor. Great ones come as comes the light of the morning sun. It comes, it shines on us all—noiselessly. Look at the gentle flower. It does not proclaim itself. It looks at us silently. So do the truly great ones.

"Bhagavan" had a third meaning. It is connected with a word which means "the sun." Is not the sun a storehouse of energy? The energy of the earth is derived from the sun. If the sun were withdrawn, we all would be frozen to death. Heat is life:

cold is death. That is true spiritually, too. When your hearts are warm, you are spiritually alive. Cold hearts spell spiritual death. The sun supplies to the earth the energy which sustains it. Your food is concentrated rays of the sun. You eat rays of the sun. That is why you grow in strength.

And so "Bhagavad Gita" also means "the Song of strength, of *shakti.*" An important note of the Gita is *shakti*—vitality. The Gita does not tell you to sit idle. The Gita says:—Be active! The Gita does not ask you to retire to the jungle. One great word Sri Krishna passed on to Arjuna was: "Uttishta!" Stand up! Stand up and fight evil! Sri Krishna's message is a message of activity.

On this note, then, let me close. The Gita is a scripture of *shakti.*

## OF SUN AND LIGHT *Albert Jacobsen*

Innumerable the scenes where rays of sun
Throw light upon varied activities;
Here, gauzy syteamers as if silken spun,
Here, gauzy streamers as if silken spun,
Illume wild life through forest tapestries;
There, where stained glass adorns a hallowed church.
They glorify an altar's sacred rites;
A sickroom's windows in the slums they search,
Exposing pain and poverty that blights.
Fierce are the rays that light a battlefield
And consecrate the cruel, macabre scene,
Though they seem gentle where the sick are healed,
And everything is peaceful and serene.
Celestial light will enter yeart and soul
Celestial light will ente r heart and soul
Of those for whom God calls the final roll.

## WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN?

*Reuben L. Musey*

It seems perfectly reasonable that God should have given us a glimpse of the future, for we are constantly losing many of our friends by death. The first thought that comes to us is: Where have they gone?

When a loved one is taken away from us, how that thought comes up before us! How we wonder if we will ever see our loved one again. How we wonder where—and when—it will be! It is then we turn to that blessed book, the Bible, where are recorded God's holy words.. There is no other book that can give us the slightest comfort. There is no other book that can tell us where the loved ones have gone.

Not long ago I met an old friend. I asked about his family. The tears came trickling down his cheeks, as he said: "I haven't any now."

"What," I said, "is your wife dead?"

"Yes, my friend."

"And your children, too?"

"Yes, all gone," he said, "and I am left here alone."

Would any of us take from that man the hope that he will meet his dear ones again? Would anyone persuade him that there is not a future where the lost will be found? No, we need not forget our dear loved ones; but we may cling forever to the enduring hope that there will be a time when we can meet again—and be blest in that land of everlasting suns—where the soul drinks from the living streams of love that roll before God's high throne.

*He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.*

*I was born to love and not to hate. —Sophocles*

# WHY SOME OF MY FRIENDS DON'T PRAY

*H. Richard Rasmusson*

It has been said that every area of life is made up of two aspects—problem and privilege. What a privilege prayer can be. "Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name." But for many of us it is also a problem. I know from conversation with some friends that they have obstacles facing them when they attempt to pray. It isn't that they are irreligious or indifferent to prayer. But their problems have put a stop to prayer in their lives.

*1*

One of the reasons why some of my friends don't pray is that they see nothing in prayer except selfish begging. They say—"In prayer people try to make God a sort of celestial bellhop. It is begging God to do for us what we ought to do for ourselves. This is immoral. So I don't pray."

A great deal of our praying is merely "passing the buck to God." It is selfish petitioning to a divine Santa Claus. Frederick Robinson, the great English preacher, tells how as a boy, going out shooting with his father, he would pray, as the dogs came to a point, that he might kill the bird. This is like the student who, not reviewing for her exam, trusted to prayer to carry her through—only to fail. How selfish to see prayer as a magic lamp which we only have to rub.

But I, too, reject prayer as selfish begging. You see, "prayer is not a means of securing God's cooperation in the fulfillment of human wishes, but a way of furthering human cooperation in the realization of God's purpose." We do not pray to bring the universe to our side. We pray to bring ourselves the side of the universe. Jesus put it: "Not my will but thine be done." What is selfish about that?

On this high level, God's will becomes our will. God's work becomes our work. We become partners with God, and our praying is ever for illumination and insight regarding His purposes.

2

A second reason why some of my friends don't pray is that they believe the God of the universe could hardly be interested in the midgets on earth.

These friends say, "The vast dimension of our new universe as opened up by modern astronomy make man insignficant. He is only a parasite infesting the epidermis of a midge among the planets."

Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes, thinking in terms of modern astronomy, said, "Astronomically speaking, man is insignificant."

If we think in terms of girth and pounds, we are indeed small and insignificant. We do not live by such reckoning, however. We value a diamond higher than a mountain. We value a baby higher than an ox. And God is less than God, less than great, if He reckons otherwise. It does seem that God must break the vague mass of humanity into individual units and know us one by one. We must stand, every one, separate in His thoughts. "All great figures have lived in the power of this individual relationship with God."

3

Still others of my friends don't pray because they regard our universe as a law-abiding one and prayer, therefore, as unnecessary.

They forgot that while our universe is law-abiding, it is so

because God expresses his purposes and will in dependable, law-abiding consistencies. And if the laws of the universe are His dependable ways of working, they are grounded in His will. If He is their creator, they are His obedient servants and dependable because He is in character consistent.

And more important for prayer than physical laws are spiritual laws. Paul put it, "Being strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man." Relate to spiritual laws, and spiritual power flows in upon us. Many have tested this and found it true.

*4*

A fourth reason why some of my friends don't pray is that they see prayer only as auto-suggestion.

They say, "Prayer is only talking to yourself, giving yourself a pep talk, hypnotizing yourself with positive suggestions."

E. Stanley Jones reminds us that even if prayer were only auto-suggestion, it would be a healthy thing, it would still be worthwhile. "It would heighten our powers to suggest the highest to them. But it is more than auto-suggestion. Prayer would never have survived had it been only that, with no Voice answering our voice, no Heart answering ours."

If around our spirits and deep within us is the spiritual universe vital with the energies of God, prayer cannot be mere auto-suggestion. Instead, auto-suggestion becomes a form of prayer. Our highest and best thoughts represent an opening of the circuit so that God's waiting energies may come into us, empowering and strengthening us. Auto-suggestion as prayer is now the psychological mechanism we use to make God real to us and the means of bringing His unlimited power into our lives. "We may hold rationally to the faith that in prayer.... we are engaged in a constant give-and-take with an 'Other'."

To all who share this experience with prayer, it becomes

dialogue not monologue, friendship not soliloquy, communion with "the Beyond which is also within."

*5*

A fifth reason why some of my friends don't pray is that they feel God ought to give us what we need without our asking.

They say, "If God is wise and good and loving, then why should we need to pray? The Bible says, 'Your Father knows your needs before you ask Him.' Why then pray?"

Prayer, however, is not a process of telling God what He does not know or of persuading Him to give us what He is reluctant to give. The chief function of prayer is to open our lives and make us able to receive what God is always ready to give. Prayer is necessary because the doors and windows of the self tend to close tight, barring out more and more completely the help and inspiration God is constantly trying to impart.

We forget that giving is a dual transaction. It involves not only the giver but also the receiver. Here is a father and he wants to give his boy a higher education. The father has money and the unselfish purpose. Yet he is frustrated in his desire. Why? Because the boy has the doors and windows of his life shut against a higher education. If it were only a matter of giving, how easy it would be for the father. But giving is dependent on receiving.

"The finest gifts cannot be dropped into another's life like stones in a basket. They must be taken or else they cannot be given. . . . The receptive heart is the absolute prerequisite of all great gifts. God himself cannot bestow His best on men unless they pray."

*A hard heart is a bad companion. —John Woolman*

## CRISIS *H. G. Woods*

All prayers of my lifetime
in which I prayed for a life
are now suddenly evoked
and rehearsed in one syllable.

## IN ME MIRACLED *Howard G. Hanson*

Through countless years and myriad ways I've come:
dolphin, I swam the primordial sea;
with turtle claws I splashed through surf-caught foam,
and with new lungs climbed landward, with new cry.

How all earth's bloods wash through my sea-swept veins
and swell my brotherhood a thousandfold
with all things living! And huge,untold designs
repeat their patterns in me, miracled.

When shall I dare to know them, touch my trace
in every flesh-bright being? . . . How dare I not,
O Magister infinite of device,
O Maker past my probe of sky-freed thought?

Then oh, be Spirit too, lest this earth grow
too dear, too near my essence' overflow.

## A CONVERSION *Mary Graham Lund*

I didn't realize before,
dear Jesus,
that Christianity meant You,
Your life
stretched over history.

I don't know how I know now
or just when
the mists lifted and I saw You
in Your Wholeness, Your hands
raised to bless
me and others, and knew I was
one of them. . . .

## FOR RENEWING OUR MINDS

*John R. Gunn*

*"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Romans 12:2*

Tell me the level on which a man's thoughts run, and I will tell you the level on which his life runs.

The key to every man is his thoughts.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts.

What we think, our outlook on life, our attitude toward

our lot and our fellowmen—this makes or mars our happiness and our usefulness.

The thoughts we harbor, the pictures we carry in our souls, our emotional attitudes, our mental habits—these mold and shape our lives, build or wreck our happiness, our health, and our value to society.

If we build into our minds the traits of fear, of complaining, or cynicism, or impurity, nothing can make us happy.

If we build the trails of cheerfulnexs and hopefulness, of kindliness and helpfulness, of trustfulness and prayerfulness, nothing can destroy our happiness.

If you have been morbid, or sour, or selfish, I bring you this word from that great interpreter of life, the apostle Paul: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Clean, happy, wholesome thoughts will transform your life.

It is because we underrate thought, because we do not see religious life, that there is so little of practical and consistent religion among us.

The religious life demands a constant renewal of our minds. There are means that aid us in this. Meditation upon the works and laws of God, thinking His thoughts, will do it. Communion with God through prayer will do it. Reading the Bible will do it. If you want something that will lift up your thoughts and give you a lift, spend a while with the Bible, pondering upon its lofty teachings, walking in company with its great and noble souls. Walk out of the atmosphere of the Bible into daily life, and you will be astonished at the strength and peace and heavenly thoughts which garrison your soul.

REJOICING *H. G. Woods*

Every challenge to rise
that brought me pain
returned four-fold rejoicing
to me again.

## EMBRACING MORNING *Leonard Opalov*

Morning caresses us
with a prismatic ray.
Morning beams brilliantly,
and we adorned
in Faith's brocade,
open the day
with a golden key.

## THE CYCLE OF AN ACTIVE LIFE

*Clara Ullrich Samuels*

In the winter hours of our heart and mind, we find ourselves often benumbed by the chill of blasting, unexpected criticism; plus the desolation left by unfaithful companions. Usually it is later tempered by the warmth of spring which restores our trust and vitality. We try earnestly to reset our course as warmth and moistening of tears make our efforts blossom out in glory. Then the heat of summer arrives with its two-fold duplicity: Unless we observe a constant guard, it may cause our efforts to stagnate or be overwhelmed by oppression. With our full attention, however, we can offset, shelter and nourish our aims as we observe any weakness on our part. Then, lo, the crowning hour of autumn opens up the final phase: the fulfillment of our real values which the "God within us" has unveiled and the faithfulness of loyal friends whom He sent to give us courage and strength during the depressing periods.

## GRATITUDE OF THE AGED *Minnie M. Bauer*

I thank you, Lord —
For having reached old age;
For ability to read and think intelligently yet;
For being able to care for myself completely;
For having known the quiet, simple, peaceful
beauty of a rural atmosphere for forty years;
For knowing the large city living, with its
activity and problems, for a period of time;
For the privilege of a tranquil life again, in
old age, in a rural town.
For the advantages of an education;
For the chance to teach youth in my younger years;
For the opportunity to care for many of the elderly ill.
For all my loving, considerate relatives;
For my friends of the yesteryears, and the now years.
For my times of travel, to see other lands and places.
For my never knowing want.
For my love of simple, unpretentious things.
For a fascinating hobby of fancy work
or needlework, in all its forms;
For a satisfying hobby, of writing free verse and prose;
For some recognition of my writings by publication.
For the rosy sunrises, that begin my day;
For the beautiful sunsets, that bring the night's rest.
For flowers, a thing of beauty to be loved;
For music, one of my great loves in life.
For this land of freedom in which I live;
For the great abundance of everything in this land.
For all the possibilities the opportunities, in
being a member of large family.
For my heritage, from the true pioneer;
For my learning in youth, the value of
truth, honesty, dignity, integrity,

morality, tolerance, mercy, compassion.
For having a home in childhood, where abiding faith,
hope, love always ruled the day.

For my constant faith and belief in God.

## PEACE ON EARTH

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them. *Christian*

What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God? *Hebrew*

To be in one's own heart in kindly sympathy with all things; this is the nature of righteousness. *Confucian*

Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love. This is an old rule. *Buddhist*

Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all. *Kahlil Gibran*

As one may ascend to the housetop by ladder, rope, or bamboo, so there are many ways to reach God. *Hindu*

Wherever you go, wherever you rest, may the peace of Good Allah keep you blest. *Moslem*

We, the gods, shall surely visit thy dwelling if loving kindness dwelleth there also. *Shinto*

## LIVING WITH THE WORLD *Sam Himmell*

To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance, says Salesman Sam. We know more bad things about ourselves than anybody else does, yet no one thinks so highly of us as we do ourselves. . . . Don't complain about other people; day in and day out you'll have more trouble with yourself than any man you meet. The best reformers the world has ever seen are those who commence on themselves. It is admirable to fight for a principle, but be sure it's a principle, not a prejudice. . . . To be happy you must be at peace with yourself; the happiest people are those who are too busy to notice. A life without problems is no life at all. If you're alive, you have problems; but who would choose the alternative? . . . There is no education like adversity. Even the best of men get knocked down many times in a lifetime, but never complain about your troubles, they are responsible for more than half your income.

## A YOUNG GIRL PRAYS

*Alice Richmond*

Heavensent this thought our God inspired:
Remember hourly trust in childhood found;
His truth as courage shared outreach in faith,
Lifting young eyes to stars in wonderment!
Let me Thy hallowed peace unfold to calm
My neighbor's pain, divine each moment's growth
To birth on high, God's tenderness reflect.
My brother's love in pathways darkened, lost—
Let me firm friendship share, thus none in blindness judge!
Strengthen, Lord, sweet light of kindness. brave hope gleam:

Compassion's warmth Thy children to enrich.
In thankfulness my prayered strength revive
As goodness triumph-born: softening life's woe....

Teach me Thy aria blessed of love, heartfelt to sing
Harmony restoring, rayed graciousness Thine own.
Like flowered fragrance let me God's grace unfurl
When evening quiet, in towering light, brings Christ to me.

## THE FOUR SEASONS *Aarno Davidson*

*Summer*
Blazing fireball strafes
parched earth, Men venture escape—
river, sea, mountain

*Autumn*
Shriveled leaves scatter
upon summer's early grave—
Nature laughs with tears

*Winter*
Earth crawls, sleeps beneath
silver quilt of flimsy flakes—
feeble sun looks on

*Spring*
Bird choirs chant, hop;
pole wires fashion music notes—
God's baton conducts

BOOKS REVIEWED *Helen Margalith*

"Amen: The Diary of Rabbi Martin Siegel" (*World Publishing Co.*)

The Reform Rabbi of a suburban congregation is confronted by a unique assortment of problems. His life in the community is complicated by personal doubts and considerations which do not afflict his more traditional brothers. Materialism, social action, errant youth who are poorly trained to study their history, and the sicknesses of an emotionally charged society tend to obliterate the solace and serenity of our more stable clergymen. When we add to this the burden of an emotionally ill wife and a highly sensitive child, we can understand why Martin Siegel found it necessary to bare his soul in public.

Making the revelations of this Diary must have been painful to the Rabbi. I'm sure he read countless times the injunction of Deuteronomy: The secret things belong to the Lord. No man wants to confess the deepest wounds of a seared soul. I'm sure he would have kept silent had he not encountered extreme material and psychic pressures. Let those who were offended by his honesty realize that Martin Siegel seems to have listened to the promptings of his heart and must certainly have felt that his near-tragic experiences could transform other stricken souls. His book is in the tradition of Jeremiah or Isaiah, who centuries ago declared that "from the brier shall spring up the myrtle." There is indeed hope for all of us and there is hope especially for a rabbi of the caliber of Martin Siegel. May he at least find his life less conflicted as he realizes a more serene future.

"Listen To The Silence" by Mildred Long (*DeVorss & Co., Publishers, 4900 Eagle Rock Road, Los Angeles, California 90041*). Meditations by an author long familiar to readers of *FIP*, some in poetry, some in Miss Long's beautifully-controlled poetic prose. Highly recommended.

## NOTICES AND COMMENTS

*TRUSTEES MEET.* The annual meeting of the Fellowship's Board of Trustees was held in New York on April 7. New trustees were welcomed. Officers will remain as they have been except that Joseph E. Thompson becomes Assistant Treasurer. This change was made at his request because of added responsibilities in his own business office and in the office of the Fellowship. Mr. Thompson will remain an active and highly-valued member of the Board. New trustee Nelson Bengston will take over as Treasurer. Also, Paul Griffith was appointed Editor; he will combine editorial duties with those of the Executive Director. Discussions were held of other Fellowship matters, including the Study of Prayer, which will be published this spring, and the already-started project for a Fellowship radio program (see below), and the feasibility of meetings being held in various parts of the country where the Executive Secretary or Executive Director could speak personally with Advisors, Contributing Editors, literary contributors, and members.

*FIP RADIO PROJECT.* Plans have been made and equipment bought for Fellowship in Prayer's radio project. The chief idea back of the project is the creation of a series of radio programs featuring some of the most interesting members of the Fellowship. The first tape was made early this year with Contributing Editor Carla Patsuris talking about her many-sided career as a poet, performer, numerologist, etc., and her long - -held belief in the purpose of the Fellowship. Additional tapes will be made at the convenience of other members willing to be interviewed. Those expecting to be in New York during the summer or fall are invited to inform the Executive Director so that taping can be scheduled. It is planned that some of the Fellowship's original members will record their reminiscences of the founder and the Fellowship's earliest days.

*NEW ADVISOR.* Reuben L. Musey has kindly accepted the Fellowship's invitation to serve as an Advisor for the Eastern Zone. Mr. Musey first came to the Fellowship's attention as a writer— his work has appeared in such publications as *Sunshine, Gold Star Family Album,* and many newspapers, and his essay *What Made America Great?* received the George Washington Medal Award of Freedoms Foundation in 1968. Mr. Musey and his wife Rosie are residents of Hagerstown, Maryland. He is a graduate of Hagerstown Junior College, where he is currently financial assistant on the administrative staff, and received a certificate in business management from the University of Wisconsin.

*PRAYER PAMPHLET READIED.* Fellowship in Prayer's report on its Study of Prayer will be mailed to members free-of-charge. In pamphlet form, it contains an introduction by Trustee Francis Merchant.

*SUBSCRIPTION RATES.* FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is published six times a year (February, April, June, August, October, and December) at the rate of $3.00 per year. Special rates are available for copies in quantity and also for back issues.

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## THE ENCOUNTER *Emma S. McLaughlin*

I met Him in the misty hush of dawning,
His garment trailing foam across the sand.
On the horizon, latent storms were spawning;
He rolled the clouds, like seashells, in His hand.
The air was soft, yet vibrant with a whisper
Of earthly voices blending to His voice;
He smiled — the slant of light made waters glister
And gulls wheel upward, seeming to rejoice.

We stood so close that I could see Him breathing —
(The inward, outward motion of the swell);
The sunlit dunes, the grasses, all were wreathing
Me in the center of a holy spell.
There may be men inclined to doubt my story
For, truthfully, I did not see His face,
But in that hour I looked upon His glory —
And He is life — and majesty — and grace.

"For a world united in prayer"

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